Senate Panel Asks Probe in Roselli Killing

Associated Press

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence asked the Justice Department yesterday to investigate the murder of John Roselli, a mobster who had told Senate investigators about his involvement in CIA plots to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

A committee spokesman also confirmed that Roselli had made a secret appearance in April before Senate investigators probing the assassination of President Kennedy.

Roselli's body was identified Sunday after it had been found in a chain-wrapped oil drum floating in Biscayne Bay off Miami. Dade County, Fla., officials said Roselli had died of asphyxiation and called it a gangland-style slaying.

Justice Department spokesmen said no decision on the Senate request for an investigation would be made until Attorney General Edward H. Levi returns today from Atlanta, where he is attending the American Bar Association meeting.

Earlier, FBI spokesmen said they would not become involved in the homicide case unless a violation of federal law turned up.

In most cases, murder is a state crime and is investigated by state or local authorities. Federal investigators can be requested if there are indications federal law may have been violated.

Roselli testified on two occasions before a Senate intelligence panel which preceded the permanent intelligence committee and which investigated wrongdoing by the CIA and FBI.

Roselli's first appearance before the committee was in June, 1975, five days after Sam Giancana, another underworld figure involved in the CIA plot to kill Castro, was shot to death in Chicago.

Roselli testified that he had been offered $100,000 by the CIA to poison Castro, according to a report subsequently released by the committee.

Although Roselli's testimony was given in secret, his appearance before the committee was well publicized.

His second appearance before the committee last April 23, however, did not become known until yesterday.